

Problems and Constraints Faced by Internal Quality Assurance Cells with Reference to Quality Improvement Practices in NAAC Accredited Autonomous and Non-Autonomous Colleges

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ABSTRACT

It is a fact that development of higher education and development of a country are closely related. Any country that is developed today in the world is mainly for its quality higher education. Therefore quality assurance in higher education has been one of the major challenges in the development agenda not only in India but also all over the world. In this context IQACs of NAAC accredited colleges are functioning for sustenance and enhancement of internal quality of the higher education institutions. In Odisha only 192 colleges out of 520 UGC affiliated colleges have valid NAAC accreditation status. Therefore it is significant to explore the problems and constraints faced by IQACs of autonomous colleges in comparison with non-autonomous colleges of Odisha in their functioning.

The exploratory survey method was adopted in the present study. Total 6 autonomous and 6 non-autonomous NAAC accredited colleges were included purposively in the sample of the study. On the basis of pilot study and NAAC prescribed guidelines focus group discussion guide was developed and conducted. Collected data were analysed by adopting content analysis techniques. The study has revealed that IQACs of autonomous colleges and non-autonomous colleges are facing various problems and constraints. However autonomous colleges are in better position than non-autonomous colleges. Appropriate steps need to be taken by policy makers, administrators, quality experts, IQAC members, Principals, teachers, students, alumni and civil society members to solve the problems and constraints by which institutional quality can be sustain and enhanced. Computational cost. It also has high accuracy and real time performance.

KEYWORDS: IQAC, NAAC, Autonomous and Non-autonomous College

INTRODUCTION

The new millennium unfolded with the science of quality *inter alia* triggering the movements for quality assurance in higher education both at global and local levels. It is widely recognised that the quality higher education promotes comprehensive and multi-level development by enhancing human and technical capabilities of the society. Higher education is the apex level of education, which produces knowledge leaders, technicians, teachers, professors, engineers, doctors, lawyers, scientists and other similar professionals to determine the progress of human society. The institutional and technical determinisms are the key to development and quality improvement in higher education. Quality assurance in higher education has been one of the major challenges emerged on the development agenda not only in India but elsewhere in the world. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) plays the vital role in quality assurance of higher education in India. NAAC has proposed to establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure in every accredited higher education institutions. The present study focuses on problems and constraints faced by Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) with reference to quality improvement practices in NAAC accredited autonomous and non-autonomous colleges of Odisha.

Relevance of the study

Technical change and institutional change are key components of development. Higher education plays an important role in facilitating these changes by incorporating all of the various demographics of the population. Higher education has been found to be significantly related to the human development index and greater for the disadvantaged groups (Joshi, 2006). At the same time lack of quality higher education creates inverse situation in the society. Quality of higher education indicates fitness for the purpose. Improvement in quality of higher education will enhance the level of human development and greater human development influence life expectancy and GDP per capita (Tilak, 1994). Quality assurance in higher education has been one of the major challenges in the development agenda not only in India but also all over the world.

The various policy initiatives of the Government of India such as establishment of University Grants Commission, NAAC and NBA and the process of accreditation, linking development grants with accreditation are the indications of official concerns and efforts for quality management (Mukhopadhyaya, 2012). As per the guideline of NAAC every accredited institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post accreditation quality

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sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC would become a part of the institution's system and work towards realisation of the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance. Efforts are being made on the part of NAAC accredited colleges to promote internal quality enhancement practices in respective institutions (Sahoo and Srivastva, 2015). The National Knowledge Commission Report (2006) and the Yashpal Committee Report (2009) on renovation and rejuvenation for structural reforms of higher education are of noteworthy to visualize the futures expansion of higher education in India. We must foster a conception of quality which may be applied to every degree of ability and to every socially acceptable activity. A missile may blow up on its launching pad because the designer was incompetent or because the mechanic who adjusted the last valve was incompetent. The same is true of everything else in our society. It is in this context of fast changing global development in the domain of higher education the learners' need to have updated knowledge resources and adequate knowledge for their utilization (Das, 2012).

The 12th five year plan suggests a range of reforms in higher education to change the role of the Central Government from "command and control" to "steer and evaluate" giving more autonomy and accountability to the state and to the higher education institutions themselves with the goal of improving quality. In the context of Odisha immediate attention on the part of regional government is required not mere as the concurrent responsibility but as an unaltered major player of regulating and development of higher education institutions (Dansana, 2013). So, according to demands and needs there has been substantial development in higher education in different regions of India. To respond to the present situation the State of Odisha has taken many initiatives in the recent times. It has well organized system of higher education supported by internal and external agencies. There are 520 degree colleges in Odisha, out of which 472 colleges come under section 2 (f) and 12 (B) of the UGC Act, 1956 and 48 colleges come under section 2 (f) only but are not included under section 12 (B) of the UGC Act, 1956, (UGC, 2018^A). Out of these total degree colleges 44 are autonomous colleges (UGC, 2018^B). Up to 27th November 2017 there were 14 university and 192 colleges in Odisha having valid NAAC accreditation status. (NAAC, 2017^A and ^B).

Internal Quality Assurance Cell is UGC sponsored scheme to be established in all its affiliated colleges with the financial support to plan, guide and monitor quality enhancement and assurance activities at institutional level. IQACs are functioning to attain excellence in NAAC accredited colleges in the state of Odisha. Especially it is significant to know how autonomous status of the colleges have made special use of this scheme in comparison to non-autonomous colleges. This paper is based on research conducted in 12 NAAC accredited colleges in Coastal Odisha. Here an attempt has been made to present problems and constraints faced by IQACs of Autonomous and Non-autonomous colleges in quality improvement practices.

Objectives

The objectives of the present study is to explore the problems and constraints faced by IQACs in their functioning.

Methods and Procedures

All NAAC accredited colleges of Odisha having IQACs were considered as the population of the study. Out of 12 NAAC accredited colleges of Coastal Odisha 6 autonomous and 6 non-autonomous colleges were included purposively in the sample of the study. The sample respondents covered 72 members i. e. six from each sample institution. A pilot study was conducted in two autonomous and two non-autonomous colleges to identify the areas where IQACs are functioning. On the basis of pilot study and NAAC prescribed guidelines focus group discussion guide was developed. Focus group discussions were conducted at institutional level as well as cluster level and collected data was analysed by content analysis techniques.

Analysis and Interpretation

The major findings related to problems and constraints faced by IQACs in their functioning has been presented on the basis of two contexts as follows:

Context I: Problems and Constraints faced by IQACs in Autonomous Colleges

The major findings related to problems and constraints faced by IQACs in autonomous-urban-government colleges have been presented as follows:

1. The curriculum of autonomous-urban-government colleges were revised occasionally due to lack of proper planning, lack of human resources and apathetic attitude of the college authority. These colleges have faced problems in effective implementation of newly introduced CBCS curriculum. The vital constraints of the above problem was lack of proper orientation to faculties and large scale vacancy in teaching posts. No regular feedbacks were taken from stakeholders for curriculum updating and revision, as no continuous efforts were taken by authority.
2. Autonomous-Urban-Government colleges faced problems in enrolling students as per students' first choice due to cut off marks in e-admission system. These colleges faced problems in maintaining students profile at department level. Due to lack of office automation/computerisation it was not easy to share students profile to all departments. It was found in the colleges that less importance were given on workshop, group discussions, poster making, field study and seminar presentation due to more importance on traditional practice of lecture method. The colleges have ICT enabled resources but it was used occasionally due to lack of well-trained regular faculties.
3. Major problems faced by IQACs of autonomous-urban-government colleges in research, consultancy and extension activities were lack of promotion of research, inactive college research committee, lack of publication output, no consultancy and no collaboration with other organisations. These problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as lack of motivation of the faculties and administrators, lack of inspiration by administration, no special incentives/facilities by college administration, no official policy for structured consultancy, lack of structured planning and lack of interest among the faculties as well as administrators.
4. The major problems faced by autonomous-urban-government colleges in infrastructure and learning resources were lack of canteen facilities, lack of study

room for teachers, lack of ICT as learning resources, lack of library automation and lack of sufficient hostel facilities. These problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as lack of interest of the principals, lack of infrastructure, lack of training to the faculties about the uses of ICT, lack of incentive as well as motivation, lack of funds, lack of trained librarian and lack of proper planning.

5. Students of autonomous-urban-government colleges were less aware about the availability of variety of scholarship. The colleges have not maintaining records about students' progress to next higher studies and getting employed. The important constraints were lack of proper guidance in career advancement. Less participation in co-curricular activities by students were also an important problem of these colleges and the related constraints were lack of awareness and interest among the students. Autonomous colleges have placement and career counselling cells, but they were not working properly. Apathetic attitude of the authority as well as lack of manpower was the important constraints of it.
6. The major problems faced by IQACs of autonomous-urban-government colleges in governance, leadership and management were less involvement of stakeholders, lack of execution of vision document, formation of governing body of the college and Irregular submission of AQAR. These problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as no continuous planning, no continuous effort, local political interference, apathetic attitude/negligence.
7. The problems and constraints with reference to innovations and best practices of accredited autonomous-urban-government colleges during the implementation of follow up activities on peer team recommendations were lack of regular functioning of IQACs, lack of stakeholders' relationship and inadequate study environment of the campus. These problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as lack of interest among the members of IQACs, no assignment to a particular staff to look after the matter and lack of awareness as well as co-operation among the members and coordinators of IQACs.

Context II: Problems and Constraints faced by IQACs in Non-autonomous Colleges

The major findings related to problems and constraints faced by IQACs in non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges have been presented as follows:

1. The curriculum of non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges were revised occasionally by the affiliating University. In this matter the above colleges have limited opportunity due to lack of autonomy. Only some senior faculties, who were members of 'Board of Studies' have limited opportunity to participate in curriculum revision process. Non-autonomous colleges have faced problems in effective implementation of newly introduced CBCS curriculum. The vital constraints of the above problem was lack of proper orientation to faculties and large scale vacancy in teaching posts. The above colleges have limited academic flexibility due to lack of diversified courses. The above colleges faced problems in curriculum enrichment due to lack of sufficient quality materials. No

regular feedbacks were taken from stakeholders for curriculum updating and revision, as no continuous efforts were taken by authority.

2. Non-autonomous-Rural-Non-government-aided colleges faced problems in enrolling students as per students' first choice due to cut off marks in e-admission system. Above colleges faced problems in maintaining students profile at department level, only college offices have been maintained students' profile. Due to lack of office automation/ computerisation it was not easy to share students profile to all departments. It was found that less importance were given on workshop, group discussions, poster making, field study and seminar presentation due to more importance on traditional practice of lecture method. The above colleges have lack of ICT enabled resources as well as lack of trained faculty to use ICT enabled devices. The major constraints in teaching-learning & evaluation were lack of well-trained faculty, lack of resources and lack of regular teaching faculties.
3. Major problems faced by IQACs of non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges in research, consultancy and extension activities were lack of promotion of research, inactive college research committee, lack of publication output, no consultancy and no collaboration with other organisations. The above problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as lack of motivation of the faculties and administrators, no weightage on research for promotion, lack of inspiration by administration, no incentives/ facilities by college administration, no official policy for structured consultancy, lack of structured planning and lack of interest among the faculties as well as administrators.
4. The major problems faced by non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges in infrastructure and learning resources were lack of canteen facilities, lack of study room for teachers, lack of ICT as learning resources, lack of library automation and lack of sufficient hostel facilities. The above problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as lack of interest of the principals, lack of infrastructure, lack of training to the faculties about the uses of ICT, lack of incentive as well as motivation, lack of funds, lack of trained librarian and lack of proper planning.
5. There were less participation of students in various societies in non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges due to lack of interest and awareness among students. In these colleges students were deprived of getting the opportunity of scholarship due to lack of awareness among them. Another problem of these colleges were students' progression from UG to PG or next higher studies. The important constraints of the above problem was lack of proper guidance in career advancement. Less participation in co-curricular activities by students were also an important problem of these colleges and the related constraints were lack of awareness and interest among the students. Non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges have no placement and career counselling cells. Apathetic attitude as well as lack of human resource were the important constraints of it.

6. The major problems faced by IQACs of non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges in governance, leadership and management were less participation of stakeholders, lack of execution of vision document, formation of governing body of the college and Irregular submission of AQAR. The above problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as no continuous planning, no continuous effort, local political interference, apathetic attitude and negligence of the co-ordinator of IQACs.
7. The problems and constraints with reference to innovations and best practices of accredited non-autonomous-rural-non-government-aided colleges during the implementation of follow up activities on peer team recommendations were lack of regular functioning of IQACs, lack of stakeholders' relationship and Poor environment of the campus. The above problems were aroused due to several important constraints such as lack of interest among the members of IQACs, no assignment to a particular staff to look after the matter and lack of awareness as well as co-operation among the members and coordinators of IQACs.

Conclusions

Irrespective of contexts of colleges, problems and constraints are found across seven quality dimensions of NAAC. Major problems are Irregular updating of curriculum, less use of ICT enabled devices, less importance on group discussion, poster making, seminar etc., inactive college research committee, apathetic attitude of the stakeholders, lack of publication output, incomplete library automation process, lack of hostel facilities, less participation of students in co-curricular activities, limited academic audit, no vision documents, irregular submission of AQAR, lack of interest among IQAC members. The major constraints of the above mentioned problems are lack of structured planning, inequality in salary, service insecurity, improper policy for professional growth, lack of infrastructure, lack of funds, lack of proper orientation, large scale vacancy, apathetic attitude of college authority, more importance on traditional methods of teaching, lack of motivation, no special incentives, lack of trained librarian, negligence attitude and inconsistent tenure of IQAC coordinators.

Recommendations

The present study have many seminal implications for policy makers, administrators, quality experts, IQAC members, Principals, teachers, students, alumni and civil society members. More or less the IQACs of autonomous colleges and non-autonomous colleges are facing problems and constraints. They require to give importance on regular updating of curriculum, use of ICT enabled teaching learning devices, orienting faculty members with updated knowledge and skills, organise doubt clearing/tutorial classes for slow learners, create achievement motive among the students, enhance computerisation of institutional administration, examination and accounts related activities, involve stakeholders in quality improvement process, motivate faculty members to undertake major and minor research projects. The IQACs must be more particular about documentation of quality related activities and disseminate the same by uploading it in their institutional websites. The authority of the institutions seek the assistance of alumni and government authority for internal quality improvement

process of the institutions. Necessary step needs to be undertaken by appropriate authority to fill up the vacancies of both teaching and non-teaching posts on regular basis without any compromise, because productive functioning of any institution highly depends upon its human resources. In the rapidly changing scenario of needs and demands, every college needs to explore the possibility of introducing more need-based diversified courses supplemented with job oriented professional subjects and quality infrastructure.

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